

Vyas, who confirmed our identification by email.

Ali and Ripley (2001) give the distribution of the Desert Wheatear as, "...India east to Bihar and south to Maharashtra, eastern Tamil Nadu... and Sri Lanka..." Ali and Whistler's (1933) [Pp. 382, "*Oenanthe deserti atrogularis* (Blyth)" = *O. d. deserti* (Temminck 1825)] is the only record of the Desert Wheatear from present day Andhra Pradesh. In that paper Ali and Whistler inform (Pp. 382) "several Wheatears were observed along the route from Nirmal to Utnoor (via Talâmadri village) between October 12 and 15 [1925]. I did not, however, come across this bird anywhere within the State [erstwhile Hyderabad State] in the course of the present Survey." However, in his unpublished notebooks (photocopy of manuscript held by senior author), Ali states after the above note, "... (Note from old diary - doubtful!?)". Neelakantan, Sashikumar and Venugopalan (1993) reported sightings from Kerala, "...a female in January 1988 at Tenari (Elappully, Palghat Dt.) and a single female 'in the next two winters' and 2 females in 'the winter of 1990-91.' ...a Desert Wheatear at Madayippara (Cannanore Dt.) on 17th August, '88." Surprisingly, this species is not even mentioned in the "Revised and Enlarged" edition of Ali's THE BIRDS OF KERALA (1999). The present sighting of the species is another instance of its occurrence outside its known wintering range.

Ali and Ripley (2001) record the distribution of the Isabelline Wheatear as, ".... the plains of northwestern India including N. Gujarat..., straggling east and southeast to

Varanasi and Sehore, and south to Ahmednagar... and Pune...Possibly a vagrant in Nepal... Recorded in Maldive Islands in November..." Lainer (1999) gives it the status of "Vagrant," for Goa, informing of "four sightings of up to 5 birds on a barren lateritic plateau near the coast, at Sancoale (Marmagoa), in November-December of three consecutive years in the mid-eighties." Robson (2000) records a single specimen on February 9-10, 2000 at Baga Fields, Goa. In view of these records, the present observation is a considerable extension of range for this species.

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### 13. NEW RECORDS OF BIRDS IN PERIYAR TIGER RESERVE, THEKKADY, KERALA

Periyar Tiger Reserve, a well known wildlife sanctuary in India, is situated in the Cardamom and Pandalam hills of the southern Western Ghats between 9° 15'-9° 40' N and 76° 55'-77° 25' E, covering an area of 777 sq. km. Robertson and Jackson (1992) recorded 266 bird species and Srivastava *et al.* (1993) recorded 249 species in Periyar Tiger Reserve.

Santharam (1996) added three species and the existing records indicate the presence of about 314 species of birds in Periyar Tiger Reserve.

An ornithological survey was carried out in the Periyar Tiger Reserve during February 2002. Four new bird species were sighted during the survey, namely Common Greenshank

(*Tringa nebularia*), Malabar Pied Hornbill (*Anthracoceros coronatus*), Ashy-crowned Sparrow-Lark (*Eremopterix grisea*) and Chestnut-bellied Nuthatch (*Sitta castanea*). We also sighted the Spot-billed Pelican (*Pelecanus philippensis*) during January 2001 near Periyar lake and the Pheasant-tailed Jacana (*Hydrophasianus chirurgus*), Purple Heron (*Ardea purpurea*) and Purple Moorhen (*Porphyrio porphyrio*) during February 2003 in a small wetland near the forest check post at Thekkady. The new additions bring the total bird

species found in the Periyar Tiger Reserve to 322.

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#### 14. OCCURRENCE OF THE TWO-SPOT GOURAMI *TRICHOGASTER TRICHOPTERUS* (PALLAS) IN PORUR, CHENNAI, TAMIL NADU, INDIA

Introductions, intentional or accidental, of exotic species of plants and animals into other countries or continents are not uncommon. This has sometimes resulted in the domination of exotic species over native ones, and among fish, the case of the food fish Mozambique Tilapia *Oreochromis mossambica* is well known.

In this note, I report the occurrence of the Two-spot Gourami *Trichogaster trichopterus* (Pallas), a native of Thailand, Malaysia, IndoChina and Indonesia (Hervey and Hems 1966; Dawnes 1998), in the wild in the suburbs of Chennai, Tamil Nadu, which is probably the first record of the species in Indian waters. I recorded good numbers of this species in drying pools in a low-lying residential area in Porur, a suburb to the west of Chennai after the northeast monsoon of 2002 and 2003. This area forms the drainage areas of the runoff of the waters of Porur Lake, a small lake that meets a part of the water requirements of Chennai.

Chennai is one of the major distribution and breeding centres of aquarium fish in India and the occurrence of the Two-spot Gourami in Chennai waters is probably an accidental or intentional outcome of ornamental fish culture. The record of the species in Porur poses two main questions. Does the species also occur in other areas of Chennai and what is the impact of the species on native species? With the spread of ornamental fish culture in India, especially in recent times, Indian waters will probably witness the entry of more exotic fish species.

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#### 15. EXTENSION OF RANGE OF *NEMACHEILUS KERALENSIS* (RITA & NALBANT) AND *PUNTIUS OPHICEPHALUS* (RAJ) TO RIVER MEENACHIL, KERALA (INDIA)

The rivers of Kerala harbour a rich and diversified fish fauna (Day 1875-1878; Pillai 1929; John 1936; Hora and Law 1941; Raj 1941; Chacko 1948; Silas 1951). However, little information is available on the present status of the fresh water fishes of Kerala, which are prone to various types of

threats such as over exploitation, introduction of exotic species, habitat destruction and pollution. The Travancore region in the southern Western Ghats of Kerala has been noted for its richness in number and variety of fresh water fish. The fresh water fish fauna of this geographical region is